United Nations A/68/PV.80

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Thursday, 27 March 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/716/Add.7)

The President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like to inform members that, since the issuance of document A/68/716/Add.6, Dominica has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. That information will be reflected in document A/68/716/Add.7 to be issued at a later date.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33

Prevention of armed conflict

(b) Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution

Draft resolution (A/68/L.39)

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrii Deshchytsia, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.39.

Mr. Deshchytsia (Ukraine): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the General Assembly. What has brought us here today is an issue of paramount importance. It is of crucial importance to my nation, of vital importance to every United Nations State Member and of even greater importance to the United Nations and the world order it embodies.

It has now been a month during which all possible and impossible boundaries of international law that had been so laboriously nourished by humankind — especially under this institution — have been ruthlessly trampled. What has happened in my country is a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Many still struggle to grasp the reality that it happened in Ukraine, in the very heart of Europe. It happened in the twenty-first century.

Over the past month, we have witnessed the most flagrant violations of international law since the inception of the United Nations. After two weeks of military occupation, an integral part of Ukraine was forcibly annexed by a State that had previously committed itself to guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum, by a State that happens to be one of the permanent members of the Security Council, entrusted by the membership of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

That act of aggression was meticulously calibrated to strike at a time when Ukraine was forming an inclusive Government. Now, despite all odds, such a Government is up and running. The act was aimed at — and continues to be aimed at — undermining the

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presidential elections in my country. Let me assure the General Assembly that Ukraine is determined to carry out its elections as scheduled on 25 May.

Eight rounds of urgent discussions on the Russian military intervention in Ukraine held by the Security Council clearly demonstrated how isolated Russia is on the issue. The mixture of false justifications, half-truths, deliberate distortions, insults and naked lies offered by the Russian side have failed to impress the Council.

Just a few days ago, at the opening session of the third Nuclear Security Summit, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need to build a culture of nuclear security. He rightly emphasized that the time had come to strengthen the rule of law in both disarmament and non-proliferation. Speaking about efforts by the United Nations to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General pointed out that the assurances provided to non-nuclear-weapon States by nuclear-weapon States must be honoured:

> "In the case of Ukraine, security assurances were an essential condition for its accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, the credibility of the assurances given to Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 has been seriously undermined by recent events. The implications are profound, both for regional security and the integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime."

We cannot agree more. Two years ago, when we proposed to the Russian side to sign a bilateral agreement on security and confidence-building measures, it refused, saying that the idea of an attack on Ukraine was absurd. Six months ago, we were preparing to have a trilateral meeting in The Hague among the leaders of Ukraine, the United States of America and Russia to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Ukraine's nuclear-free success story. Yet that plan was crushed almost overnight by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea.

> "We have consistently called for the recognition of a polycentric world order, equal and indivisible security in full conformity with the United Nations Charter's basic principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity of any State, inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs ... A just and democratic world order cannot be achieved without a strict observance of the principles of the supremacy of international law, mainly of the United Nations Charter".

Mr. President, you may think that the foregoing are my words. They are not. They are in fact an excerpt from the statement of position of the Russian Federation before the opening of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

> "Recently a common argument has been increasingly made to the effect that the threat or use of force, directly prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations, is virtually the most effective method of addressing international problems, including the settlement of domestic conflicts ... despite the fact that recent experience with such interventions has proved that they are ineffective, meaningless and destructive. That is an extremely dangerous path leading to the erosion of the foundations of today's world order and the subversion of the weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation regimes." (*A/68/PV.15, p. 34*)

That paragraph is also not Ukraine's, although we fully agree with its thrust. It is taken from a statement made by my colleague, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, at the general debate last September. There are volumes of such statements made by representatives of the Russian Federation at the United Nations.

"Practice what you preach", one might think. We in Ukraine do. As does the African Union, whose Constitutive Act, of 2001, calls in Article 4 for, inter alia, sovereign equality and interdependence among Member States of the Union, respect for borders and the prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union, and non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another.

As does the Organization of American States, whose Charter clearly states that no territorial acquisitions or special advantages obtained either by force or by other means of coercion shall be recognized.

As does the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with its Charter renouncing aggression or other actions in any manner inconsistent with international law.

As does the European Union.

As does the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with its 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

The list goes on and on.

Despite all the wrongs that have been inflicted on my country over the past month, draft resolution A/68/L.39, before the Assembly today, was drafted with the sole and strict goal of upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The purpose of the draft resolution is to reinforce core United Nations principles at a moment when they are experiencing a major challenge. The text addresses respect for territorial integrity and the non-use of force to settle disputes. It does not break any new legal or normative ground. Yet it sends a crucial message that the international community will not allow what has happened in Crimea to set a precedent for further challenges to our rules-based international framework. It clearly serves a de-escalatory purpose and explicitly welcomes international efforts, including those by the Secretary-General, in support of a peaceful settlement of the situation with respect to Ukraine.

I am convinced that a strong vote today will help deter further aggressive moves. I sincerely thank all sponsors of the draft resolution, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", and look forward to its adoption by the General Assembly.

One month has cost us dearly. More inaction may cost us the Organization itself. By voting in favour of the draft resolution, the General Assembly will vote in favour of the United Nations Charter; a vote against it or abstention in the voting is tantamount to undermining the Charter.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On 21 March an event occurred that is of truly historic significance. Following the referendum in the Crimea, during which the overwhelming majority of the Crimean population voted in favour of being with Russia, there was a reunification of Crimea and the Russian Federation. We call on everyone to respect that voluntary choice, just as Russia has done.

Russia could not refuse the Crimeans' wish to support their right to self-determination in fulfilling their long-standing aspirations. Historical justice has been vindicated. Crimea was an integral part of our country for several centuries. It shares with our country a common history, culture and, most important, a common people. Only when an arbitrary decision by the leadership of the former Soviet Union in 1954 to transfer the Crimean Sevastopol to the Ukrainian republic in the framework of a single State was that natural state of affairs upset. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, it became clear that Crimea was cut off from Russia. In 1992, the people of Crimea adopted a Constitution that established that Crimea would be an independent State within Ukraine. However, soon after that, the Constitution was changed by Kyiv without consulting the people of Crimea, and the status of the peninsula was reduced to an autonomous republic as part of a unitary Ukrainian State.

The Crimeans never accepted that state of affairs. They openly demonstrated their sympathy for Russia. Their patience snapped against the background of a deep political crisis that occurred in Ukraine. The crisis was to a large extent provoked by the adventurous actions of the current political forces, which sought to break the centuries-old ties of Russia and Ukraine, by giving Kyiv a false choice between either the European Union and the West or Russia. That policy was carried out with unprecedented bluntness. They could either sign a Ukraine-European Union association agreement, as demanded of the Ukrainian Government, or they could face sanctions. Within the ranks of anti-Government demonstrators were representatives of the European Union and the United States, who openly marched alongside them and called on them to openly carry out anti-Government actions.

The central square of the city — Maidan Nezalezhnosti — was turned into a militarized camp. Well-trained and equipped units of militants carried out violent attacks against law enforcement bodies and seized administrative buildings. In one of those buildings, the trade unions building, the so-called common diversion of the Maidan was organized. On the seventh floor of that building was a permanent staff member of the United States Embassy. By the way, it is from that building that snipers were shooting at police and demonstrators; that action was clearly aimed at provoking a violent overthrow of the Government.

At some point, it appeared that it would be possible to stop before the situation became worse. On 21 February, President Yanukovych and the leaders of the main opposition party signed an agreement, which provided for disarming the militants, freeing the administrative building that had been seized, establishing a Government of national unity, launching a constitutional process and holding presidential elections by the end of the year. However, someone thought that such a scenario was not sufficiently radical. The violence continued. Under the threat of physical

violence, President Yanukovych had to leave Kyiv and then Ukraine.

The legitimate Government stopped operating in Kyiv. Violence became the rule of politics. In the Verkhovna Rada, the parties that supported the Yanukovych majority became victims of that violence. As a result, the Rada was reshuffled and, instead of a Government of national unity, a so-called Government of victors emerged. The shots were called by those who conducted an armed coup, national radicals who — according to the definition of the European Parliament — preached racist, anti-semitic and xenophobic views and seemed to hate everything that was Russian and did not conceal that they considered the Ukrainian allies of nazis as their ideological ancestors. Nearly the first decision of the new Government was to revoke the official status of the Russian language, which the Crimeans and the inhabitants of eastern and southern Ukraine use. In those regions, Kyiv began appointing Governors who were rejected by the local people. Threats were addressed to Crimea to send so-called friendship trains there — groups of militants that would continue the kind of violence being carried out in Kyiv and in the western and central regions of Ukraine. All that created a kind of critical mass that led the Crimeans to take a decision on self-determination and reunification with Russia. I think that one has to be very misanthropic to criticize them for that.

In the light of all the reasons I just referred to, Russia is against the draft resolution A/68/L.39. It is confrontational in nature and seeks to put into question the meaning of the referendum that took place in Crimea, which has already played a key historical role. It would be counterproductive to challenge it.

At the same time, we think that the draft resolution contains some important and correct statements; for example, the call to refrain from unilateral actions or inflammatory rhetoric, which could lead to increased tensions. We think that, in order to heed that appeal, it is not necessary to adopt any resolutions. It is simply important to base our position on the interests of the Ukrainian people — the interests of normal international relations. We hope that kind of understanding will prevail in the course of today's discussion and in the course of the dialogue on Ukraine.

Russia has taken part in this dialogue in a most constructive fashion. Our advice is simple — it is important to implement the main provisions of the agreement of 21 February. Ukraine requires a true constitutional process with the participation of all civilized political forces in all regions that could lead to the kind of conditions where people do not have to fear for their lives and their safety and that would ensure that their fundamental rights can be exercised.

The President: I now give the floor to the Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the General Assembly. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. Montenegro, Albania, Norway and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

After the horrors of the Second World War, the international community agreed on a new system of international relations based on the Charter of the United Nations. That system was designed to protect the peace and security of all countries around the world. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard it.

The European Union supports draft resolution A/68/L.39, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and all 28 States members of the European Union are sponsors. The draft resolution reconfirms the importance of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, notably the obligation of all States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and to settle their disputes by peaceful means in full respect of international law.

Significantly, the draft resolution also affirms the General Assembly's commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Those principles are also prominently included in the political provisions of the Association Agreement signed on Friday, 21 March, between Ukraine and the European Union.

The European Union remains committed to upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The European Union does not recognize the illegal referendum in Crimea, which is in clear violation of the Ukrainian Constitution. It strongly condemns the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognize it.

The European Union firmly believes that there is no place in the twenty-first century for the use of

force and coercion to change borders in Europe or elsewhere. The European Union strongly condemns the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces. The Russian actions are not only in breach of the Charter of the United Nations, they are also in clear breach of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its subsequent processes and instruments within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which over the past 40 years have contributed to overcoming divisions in Europe and building a peaceful and united continent. Those actions also violate specific commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the bilateral Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership of 1997.

The European Union urges Russia to take steps to de-escalate the crisis, immediately withdraw its forces back to their pre-crisis numbers and garrisons in line with its international commitments and avail itself of all the relevant international mechanisms to find a peaceful and negotiated solution, in full respect of its bilateral and multilateral commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European Union welcomes the meeting of Russia's Foreign Minister with his Ukrainian counterpart in The Hague this Monday, but deplores that Russia has still not taken steps to de-escalate the crisis and that direct talks between Ukraine and the Russian Federation have still not started. We call on both Ukraine and Russia to start a meaningful dialogue as soon as possible and without preconditions.

The European Union fully supports multilateral initiatives aimed at fostering peace, stability and security, and respect for human rights in Ukraine. We commend the visit of the Secretary-General to Moscow and Kyiv last week.

The European Union welcomes the agreement reached on 21 March on the deployment of an OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine to monitor and support the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments. The European Union is fully committed to the monitoring mission's success and calls for its early deployment throughout Ukraine.

We also applaud the deployment of a United Nations human rights monitoring mission to Ukraine. We welcome the fact that Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović was finally given access to Crimea. We call on the United Nations mission to be given such access as well. We strongly share the view of Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović that there is an urgent need to assess and report on human rights violations and on the implications of recent events and to monitor the current situation throughout the country so as to help investigations, prevent further violations and verify the truth with regard to the human rights situation. We also welcome the valuable contribution of the Council of Europe.

We commend the measured response shown thus far by Ukraine. We welcome the Ukrainian Government's commitment to ensuring the representative nature and inclusiveness of governmental structures reflecting regional diversity, to ensuring the full protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, to undertaking constitutional reform, to investigating all human rights violations and acts of violence and to fighting extremism. In that context, the European Union encourages the Government of Ukraine to ensure that the presidential elections to be held on 25 May are free and fair.

The European Union is ready to stand by Ukraine and committed to providing strong financial support to its economic and financial stabilization. We encourage other Member States and international organizations, including financial institutions, to assist in restoring the stability of Ukraine and supporting structural reforms.

The European Union supports the Ukrainian people and their right to choose their own future. Our common goal is to restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and uphold its independence. The European Union stands ready to facilitate and engage in a meaningful dialogue involving Ukraine and Russia, including through the establishment of a multilateral mechanism. The European Union will remain at the forefront of efforts to find a political solution in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Power (United States of America): We meet today to express our collective judgement on the legality of the Russian Federation's military intervention in, and occupation of, Ukraine's Crimea region.

The draft resolution before us (A/68/L.39) is about one issue and one issue only — affirming our commitment to the sovereignty, political independence,

unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Through it, we make clear our ongoing support for the fundamental idea that borders are not mere suggestions. At the same time, this draft resolution expresses the desire of the international community to see a peaceful outcome to the dispute between Ukraine and Russia and stresses the importance of maintaining an inclusive political dialogue that reflects every segment of Ukrainian society.

We have always said that Russia had legitimate interests in Ukraine. It has been disheartening in the extreme to see Russia carry on as if Ukrainians have no legitimate interests in Crimea, when Crimea is a part of Ukraine. Self-determination is a value that all of us here today hail. We do so while recognizing the critical, foundational importance of national and international law. Coercion cannot be the means by which to achieve self-determination. The chaos that would ensue is not a world that any of us can afford — it is a dangerous world. We echo the views expressed by all regions of the world these past weeks calling for a de-escalation of tensions and an electoral process in Ukraine that will allow the people of that country, in all of their diversity, to choose their leaders, freely, fairly and without coercion.

Speaking at The Hague two days ago, President Obama said,

> "If the Ukrainian people are allowed to make their own decisions, their decision will be that they want to have a relationship with Europe and they want to have a relationship with Russia, and that this is not a zero-sum game".

Ukraine was wise to bring its concerns before the General Assembly. It is wise to seek our backing for the preservation of its rights, which are also the rights of all of us to have our territory and independence respected. Ukraine is justified in seeking our votes in reaffirming and protecting its borders. It is justified in asking us not to recognize the new status quo that the Russian Federation has tried to create with its military. Ukraine merits our commendations for the restraint it has shown and the positive steps it has taken to prevent a further escalation of the crisis and deserves our full support in trying to persuade Russia to end its isolation and to move from a policy of unilateral confrontation and aggressive acts to a good faith diplomatic effort informed by facts, facilitated by dialogue and based on law.

We urge members to vote in favour of a draft resolution that enshrines the centrality of territorial integrity and calls for a diplomatic — not a military — solution to the crisis.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this plenary meeting. The situation in Ukraine is serious, and the international community must reaffirm its strong resolve to urgently find a peaceful solution to the crisis. It is appropriate that we discuss it under an agenda item that highlights the importance of prevention and diplomacy, namely, "Prevention of armed conflict: Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution".

Brazil has been following the escalation of tensions in Ukraine attentively. Our concern reflects our close bilateral ties with Ukraine, which in 2009 were elevated to the level of a strategic partnership. Together Brazil and Ukraine are developing high-technology projects, including in the field of space technology. Brazil is also proud to be host to one of the largest communities of people of Ukrainian descent outside Europe. Brazil has stated its concern about the gravity of the situation since the very early stages of the crisis. We expressed deep regret over the deaths in Kyiv and urged all parties to conduct dialogue, underscoring that the political crisis should be addressed peacefully and on the basis of respect for institutions and human rights.

Brazil has consistently upheld that the Charter of the United Nations must be respected under all circumstances. That position reflects our unflinching defence of an international system based on cooperative multilateralism and respect for international law. In that regard, Brazil supports all efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis and urges the Russian Federation and Ukraine to engage in constructive talks aimed at resolving their differences. We commend the Secretary-General's initiatives to de-escalate tensions, restore calm and promote dialogue. We encourage him to continue working on a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Brazil invites the parties to engage in an inclusive political dialogue that takes into account the diversity of the Ukrainian people and respects the rights of all Ukrainians, including all minorities.

In this situation, it is of the utmost importance that all stakeholders exercise maximum restraint.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 22 February, President Raúl Castro Ruíz said that

the intervention of Western Powers must stop in order to enable the Ukrainian people to exercise their right to self-determination in a legitimate way, and that we should not ignore the fact that such acts could have very serious consequencse for international peace and security.

As Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, pointed out at a press conference in Havana on 6 March, subsequent events have demonstrated the gravity and validity of that statement, and that we cannot accept the violent overthrow of a constitutional Government at the cost of dozens of dead and wounded as a result of an intervention by the United States and some of its NATO allies, threats to citizens' integrity based on their national origin and the destruction of legitimate and legally recognized institutions and entities. He added that those threatening the Russian Federation with sanctions and reprisals were the Governments that brought about regime change in Ukraine, and, prior to that, started wars of conquest, interfered or intervened directly in the internal affairs of various States around the world that disagreed with their goals of domination and defended their own sovereignty and independence.

While earnestly opposed to the imposition of sanctions on the Russian Federation, Cuba condemns hypocrisy, double standards and the aggression manifest in the actions and pronouncements of NATO concerning the matter. The Cuban Foreign Minister warned that history would demand that the United States and its allies take responsibility for an increasingly offensive military doctrine outside the borders of the North Atlantic alliance, which threatens the sovereignty and independence of every State and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The attempt to extend NATO up to the borders of the Russian Federation is a serious threat to international peace, security and stability.

In his statement of 22 February, President Castro noted that numerous analogies could be found in United States unconventional warfare manuals that have been applied in various countries of our region and, with related refinements, on other continents, as the cases of Syria and Ukraine testify. He invited those who had doubts on the matter to look at United States Army Training Circular, TC 18-01, published on 30 November 2010 and entitled *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*. Can the United States and NATO provide assurances that the use of force and the concepts of war envisaged in that document are not applicable to, nor can be applied against other countries, including some in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States proclaimed a zone of peace?

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that Ukraine and Cuba are united by deep, historic, unbreakable ties. We will always remember Ukrainians' contribution to our development. In a modest way, we have tried to live up to our duty of solidarity, particularly with the children affected by the Chernobyl accident. No one has done more or with greater care for those children than the people of Cuba.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The recent events and the current situation in Ukraine are a major challenge to the rule of law. All members of the Organization are bound by the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State. The annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol is therefore a very serious violation of international law and of grave concern to the Government of Liechtenstein. We consider that action null and void and will not recognize it or its consequences. The annexation was preceded by an illegitimate declaration of independence based on a referendum held in violation of the Constitution of Ukraine and of basic tenets of international law, including paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. The events also starkly illustrate the continued relevance of an internationally agreed definition of aggression. Such a definition was agreed on by consensus at the 2010 Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Kampala. We hope that States will continue to expeditiously ratify the amendments to the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression.

The Charter commits us to both the principle of territorial integrity and the right of all peoples to self-determination. The two are designed to be compatible, and the relationship between them was further elaborated in subsequent texts. In adopting the Declaration on Friendly Relations in 1970, the Assembly struck a careful balance between the right of self-determination and the principle of territorial integrity. Some 20 years ago, Liechtenstein presented an initiative to help operationalize the right to self-determination through various degrees of self-administration. The initiative was aimed at encouraging States to provide appropriate levels of self-administration to entities within their borders,

based on consultation and negotiation, with third-party assistance when necessary. Those ideas were designed to prevent dissatisfaction on the part of communities within States that could lead to claims of independence, without at the same time excluding independence as an option. Under that model, the various stages of self-administration, as well as the independence option, become the result of an agreement between the parties concerned. We are fully committed to the right of self-determination, exercised in conformity with international law. It is that very commitment that leads to the conclusion that the draft resolution before us is a balanced and faithful reflection of current international law. We therefore support it without any reservation.

The failed adoption of the draft resolution in the Security Council earlier this month raises important governance questions for the Organization. There has been a worrisome increase in the use of the veto and the threat thereof in the recent past, sometimes in a manner that prevented the United Nations from fulfilling its core functions. But the vote in the Council on 15 March (see S/PV.7138) gave rise to an additional concern that requires further consideration.

According to paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Charter of the United Nations, Council members that are parties to a dispute shall abstain from voting on decisions under Chapter VI of the Charter. It seems to us that this provision should have been applied — a perception that has been only strengthened by the events since. It is important that the question finds the attention of the wider membership, together with other urgent issues concerning the use of the veto.

We support all efforts that will help prevent a further escalation of the situation in Ukraine, which remains volatile. We welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General and the efforts undertaken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe under the chairmanship of Switzerland. We applaud in particular the agreement to deploy a special monitoring mission, and are confident that those international and regional efforts can greatly contribute to de-escalating the situation on the ground.

Before the events discussed in today's draft resolution and thereafter, the situation in Ukraine has been fuelled by a serious human rights crisis and at least partial breakdown of the rule of law. The strong and early engagement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has therefore been crucial, and we support the deployment of a mission by her Office throughout Ukraine. We believe that a return to the rule of law and effective protection of the rights of all persons belonging to minorities in the country are indispensable prerequisites for an inclusive political dialogue.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution before the General Assembly (A/68/L.39) is of universal importance, yet its relevance is even greater to States that, due to their small size and limited resources, depend solely upon the legitimacy of international law to protect their sovereignty, defend their integrity, strengthen security and preserve peace.

The draft resolution arises from a severe bilateral crisis of disturbing global implications. But its text is broader than a specific geographic location and focuses on reaffirming the principles and standards of conduct that are crucial for stability, peace and international coexistence. Among those principles and standards must be noted respect for the territorial integrity of States, fulfillment of formal commitments among States, including rejection of the use of force in settling disputes, and full and genuine exercise of self-determination without falsehood or condition. For all of those reasons, it is also a draft resolution on respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations clearly defines rights and obligations in regard to which compliance is not optional. All Members of the Organization must respect them. But perhaps an even greater obligation weighs on the five States that, under Articles 23 and 27 of the Charter, possess special powers and responsibilities regarding the Organization, and hence to its other Members and the international community.

Costa Rica has no such power or competency, or any means to defend itself against external aggression. Our weapon is international law. We view the draft resolution as a way to reaffirm and defend the law. Staying silent now, in the light of the very serious implications, risks leading to further, perhaps worse, future violations.

The illegitimate violation by force of Ukraine's territorial integrity is clear. Also clear is the fact that one of the three States that pledged in 1994 to respect Ukraine's borders in exchange for Ukraine's renunciation of nuclear weapons has failed to uphold its commitment, with serious implications for nuclear non-proliferation. That is a source of concern for the

entire international community, but in particular for countries such as those of Latin America and the Caribbean that have declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free.

Similarly, we are concerned that in the light of real or perceived disputes, the first line of action has been the deployment of military force rather than the launching of dialogue. Neither conduct is acceptable. All lead to disturbing precedents and, added to other elements, in terms of the voting of 16 March in Crimea, more than opposing Ukraine's Constitution, such action has violated the legitimate exercise of the right to self-determination.

To be genuine, self-determination must be preceded by open debate based on clear rules accepted by all parties, impartial authorities and the presenting of real options to the people. Furthermore, self-determination must be exercised without exclusion, influence or intimidation. Unfortunately, those elements were absent in this case.

The fait accompli could impose a reality on the ground, but it will not establish rights. We hope that, with the Assembly's adoption, the draft resolution will be able to rectify the violations that have occurred and prevent worse ones from taking place, and thus ensure a more respectful, stable and peaceful future coexistence with respect for the rule of law.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): Russia's military intervention in Ukraine is a grave threat to international peace and security. Canada joins our partners and allies in condemning in the strongest terms this unilateral and unjustified assault on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Under Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, all States are obliged to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other State. Article 2 also reaffirms States' obligations to settle international disputes through peaceful means. Any attempt at disrupting the national unity or territorial integrity of a State is incompatible with the fundamental purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

(*spoke in French*)

Through its unilateral actions in invading and seeking to annex Crimea, Russia has blatantly violated those core principles. Crimea's so-called referendum was not authorized by Ukraine. It was conducted while Crimea was under Russia's illegal military occupation. The referendum is therefore illegitimate and null and void. We do not and will not recognize its outcome.

(*spoke in English*)

As a result of Russia's refusal to de-escalate, Canada has been forced, along with our Group of Seven partners and other allies, to take action. We have recalled our ambassador from Moscow for consultations. We have limited our engagement with Russia and suspended military-to-military contacts. We have frozen the assets of former Ukrainian officials, including former President Yanukovych. Last week, we imposed financial sanctions and entry bans on Russian and Crimean officials who bear responsibility for the crisis in Crimea and for threatening Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is not too late for Russia to choose an alternate path. Canada fully supports efforts in the deployment of a comprehensive special monitoring mission by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We welcome Russia's support for the mission. However, the mission needs to be given access to all of Ukraine, including Crimea. Canada also supports the United Nations decision to send monitors to investigate reports of human rights violations across Ukraine, no matter the alleged perpetrators. That mission, too, must be allowed into Crimea.

We believe that Ukraine has the right to choose its own future, free of coercion and the threat of violence by outside Powers. As a result of Russia's aggression in Crimea, and its refusal to de-escalate, Canada strongly supports draft resolution A/68/L.39 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The draft resolution reaffirms the international community's commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

(*spoke in French*)

The draft resolution also stresses the importance of protecting the rights of all persons in Ukraine, including the rights of Crimean Tatars and other minorities. Finally, it calls upon all States, international organizations and agencies to oppose any alteration to the status of Crimea or the city of Sevastopol on the basis of the referendum of 16 March, which is illegitimate and has no validity.

(*spoke in English*)

The international community cannot return to the days of the 1930s, when stronger Powers carved up weaker nations. Relations between States must be governed by the rule of law, not the law of the jungle.

Canada calls on the Russian Federation to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to conform to international law, to avoid any further loss of life and to fully reverse its occupation of Crimea. We therefore urge all Member States to support the draft resolution.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important debate today on the situation in Ukraine.

Japan fully agrees with the draft resolution entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine" (A/68/L.39), and therefore decided to sponsor it. With your permission, Sir, I would like to state some key points regarding Japan's position on this matter.

The Russian Federation's recognition of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea's independence, along with its illegal attempt to annex Crimea, represents an infringement of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It is a clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Whether the international community looks at what is happening in Ukraine as a bystander or chooses to stand up and take appropriate action could have a grave impact on what the international community will look like in 10 or 20 years. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently said, we are at an important crossroads.

This is not a problem for Ukraine or Europe alone. Any attempt to change the status quo with the threat of force in the background is a serious challenge to the entire international community. No country in the world should overlook an attempt by another State to alter the status quo by such means.

Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution urges all parties to pursue immediately the peaceful resolution of the situation. In that regard, the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Russian Federation on 24 March is an important step. Continued and serious dialogue between both parties is of crucial importance.

As stated in the draft resolution, we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international and regional organizations to support a de-escalation of the situation with respect to Ukraine. Japan is ready to support such initiatives and has decided to contribute €100,000 to the activities of the OSCE in the field of the promotion of political dialogue in Ukraine.

At the same time, in order to ensure the economic stability of Ukraine, which is now facing severe financial conditions, strong support by the international community is indispensable. In this spirit, Japan has decided to make a financial contribution of up to $1.5 billion for the stability and prosperity of Ukraine.

I would like to conclude by saying that Japan will vote in favour of the draft resolution. I further reaffirm Japan's commitment to the pursuit of a peaceful solution to the situation in Ukraine, working in close cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations. Japan will remain seized of this matter and continue to play an active role.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has been paying heightened attention to the developments in the situation in Ukraine. Recently, the spillover effects of the Ukraine crisis have become very obvious. The current stance of confrontation between the parties is something that China does not want to see at all.

The question of Ukraine involves the interests and concerns of various parties, so there should be a balanced approach to addressing the question. All parties should exercise restraint, refrain from exacerbating the situation and continue their efforts to iron out their differences through political and diplomatic means to solve the question of Ukraine within the framework of law and order.

China has been calling on the international community to make constructive efforts, including through good offices, to ease the situation in Ukraine. We believe that the actions the United Nations has taken on the question of Ukraine should reflect consensus by all parties and should be conducive to the relaxation of tensions and to achieving a political settlement of the crisis. China supports the mediation efforts by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We have also taken note of the host of proposals put forward by the parties concerned on solving the question of Ukraine.

In the context of ongoing diplomatic mediation efforts by the parties concerned, an attempt to push

ahead with a vote on draft resolution A/68/L.39, on the question of Ukraine, will only further complicate the situation.

China has always been opposed to intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and has always respected the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. China has adopted a consistent, balanced and impartial approach to the question of Ukraine. China has proposed an initiative comprising three principled points for the political settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. China calls for the early establishment and implementation of an international coordination mechanism, with the participation of all parties concerned, in order to explore and consider the ideas, concepts and proposals for a political settlement. The most pressing matter now is to identify those ideas, concepts and proposals so as to prevent further escalation of tension.

China will continue to do its utmost to promote the maintenance of peace and dialogue and to play a more constructive role in achieving a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Turkey attaches importance to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political unity of Ukraine. The results of the illegal referendum held in Crimea on 16 March, in violation of the Ukrainian Constitution and international agreements, do not bear legal validity. Turkey does not recognize the developmente facto situation. We believe that establishing faits accomplis through military means is extremely dangerous and inimical and can lead to negative consequences for the stability and security of the entire region.

Turkey also places strong emphasis on the security, well-being and rights of the Crimean Tatar Turks, who are an integral part of the Crimean population. Since the onset of the crisis, they have responsibly and peacefully voiced their views and concerns, as they always have in the past. We will continue to closely follow their situation.

A political solution to the crisis in Ukraine should be found through diplomatic means on the basis of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within the framework of universal democratic principles and in accordance with the law and international agreements. We will continue to convey that message in all relevant bilateral and multilateral platforms.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for opening the floor in this timely debate of the General Assembly under the agenda item "Prevention of armed conflict" in relation to the current situation in Ukraine.

As a sponsor of the draft resolution before us (A/68/L.39), Georgia also aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to make the follow remarks.

Georgia unequivocally supports the political independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. It does not recognize the referendum conducted in Ukraine's Crimea region on 16 March as legal and legitimate.

What happened in Ukraine reminds us of what we saw in Georgia in 2008, when Russia seized Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Six years after the war, 20 per cent of my country remains under illegal Russian occupation, with more than 400,000 internally displaced persons and refugees denied the right of return to their homes. Georgia's continuous calls on the Russian Federation to reciprocate a pledge of non-use of force remain unanswered. Moreover, the violation of Georgia's airspace by Russian gunships and drones has become a frequent phenomenon of late.

The latest developments make it apparent that the existing security architecture of the current international system is being undermined and the credibility of United Nations threatened. We support closer international engagement in Ukraine through the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international and regional organizations. We deem it absolutely necessary that the internationally mandated mission have access to the whole territory of Ukraine, as requested by the Ukrainian Government. That is our principled position, again based on our own experience, when, following a Russian veto on the extension of the mandate of a United Nations mission to Georgia, six years after the war, we see a void in which no one is allowed to monitor the violations of human rights in the occupied territories.

Georgia joins the international community's call for no partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine or modification of its borders to take take place through the threat or use

of force or other unlawful means, as stipulated in the draft resolution before us.

Concerted action is needed. Only through such action can we restore the stability of the United Nations system and prevent the annihilation of international law. Georgia once again calls on all Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland): For a small country such as Iceland, respect for international law and relations between States are of crucial importance.

Russia's actions in Crimea have challenged the core principles of the United Nations. The annexation of Crimea is contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulate, inter alia, the non-use of force to settle disputes and respect for the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Member States. Other international agreements have also been violated, such as the 1994 Budapest Memorandum and the 1997 Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership.

Neither the so-called referendum of 16 March or Russia's annexation of Crimea change the legal status of the region. According to international law, Crimea is part of Ukraine. The referendum, which was held while Russian forces were in complete control of Crimea, was illegal and did not meet the basic standards for democratic elections.

The crisis must be resolved by peaceful means. We urge Russia to cooperate with the Ukrainian Government and the international community in order to find ways out of the crisis.

In this forum, it is natural to focus on international law, the preservation of peace and security and respect for human rights. The message from the international community is clear — violations of international law are unacceptable. It is important to demonstrate a strong international consensus on the crisis in Ukraine. The recent vote in the Security Council on a draft resolution in support of Ukraine, co-sponsored by Iceland, shows that Russia is isolated in this matter (see S/PV.7138).

The Foreign Minister of Iceland visited Ukraine last week. His message was clear — Iceland strongly supports the Ukrainian people and condemns Russia's actions. The use of military force to redraw national boundaries is unacceptable and will have serious consequences for Russia's international standing. Iceland is fully aligned with the European Union with regard to the introduction of restrictive measures in support of Ukraine.

In the current situation, Ukraine deserves our full political and economic support. Iceland calls for strong international support for Ukraine, not only here at the United Nations but also from other international organizations, including the international financial institutions. The situation in Ukraine is of grave concern to all States that value international law and peaceful cooperation. The violation of the sovereignty and territorial borders of Ukraine is not acceptable.

The most effective way to bring stability and security to Ukraine is to provide economic and political support to the Ukrainian people, who took to the streets in November last year, demanding change, political and economic reform and respect for democratic values and human rights. They suffered great losses but kept their hope. We cannot let them down. It is also therefore of the utmost importance that the Ukrainian Government successfully meet the demands of its people in the democratic reform process ahead, while emphasizing the rule of law, good governance and robust anti-corruption measures, and safeguarding the rights of all people, including minorities.

We urge all parties to resolve the crisis by peaceful means through direct political dialogue, respecting the will of the Ukrainian people.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, the General Assembly has been convened as a result of the use of force against sovereign States through measures aimed at overthrowing Governments elected by the votes of their citizens. That total rupture of the constitutional order leads to widespread violence and gives way to coups d'état.

This growing trend to destabilize legitimate, democratically constituted Governments in order to overthrow them, violating the sacred principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, which leads to crisis situations, real human tragedy and untold suffering for their peoples, is reprehensible and extremely worrying. Those who are speaking of democracy are precisely those who are actually subverting it by undemocratic methods in order to advance their own interests. We will not tire of repeating that such a policy of double standards is in truth the real threat to international peace and security.

We have seen in recent years how they have organized, financed and directed from outside internal situations of violence and terrorism in countries that do not yield to their interests, manipulating human rights and civil liberties with disinformation campaigns that start from their own centres of power to force regime change and replace them with regimes that will comply with their policies.

Our President Daniel Ortega Saavedra recently pointed out with clarity:

> "We are witnessing these crises in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and recently in Eastern Europe, and the world remains turbulent. And who is turning the world upside down? Those who want to maintain the oppression of the peoples of our planet, who are trying to establish new forms of colonization, new forms of slavery in the name of democracy, in the name of liberty, stimulating barbarism.
>
> "The same scheme that was used in Honduras to oust President Manuel Zelaya is what we have just seen in Ukraine — just as barbaric, just as brutal, just as bloody! Now in Ukraine there is a president put in place by the intervention. And Ukraine has a minority population that agrees with these brutal events, and another group — the majority — that is against them, which has led autonomous communities to demand their independence."

It is not through policies based on double standards that we strengthen a world of peace. It is not through coups d'état to bring about regime change that we strengthen a world of peace. It is through unity, solidarity and the brotherhood between our peoples, through policies that favour of peace and development, and through diplomatic efforts and solutions that we will achieve the international peace and security. We uphold the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, particularly when it is exercised in a sovereign, peaceful and legitimate manner through the vote.

Because we want peace and believe in the prevention and resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, we reject all unilateral methods, such as political or economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, as they violate international law and do not contribute to easing the tense atmosphere. We support an inclusive political settlement, the result of goodwill on all sides, so that stability and peace may prevail. That is why we will vote against draft resolution A/68/L.39.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, Bolivia exercises its right to take the floor before the General Assembly.

The fact that the Assembly has been convened to deal with an issue that could not be resolved in the Security Council shows once again the ossified and anachronistic ways in which the Organization works. It is no exaggeration to reiterate that Security Council reform and the revitalization of the Assembly cannot be postponed in order to bring about their democratization and to guarantee that they work effectively in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Bolivia is closely following the events that have been taking place. We are extremely concerned to see the possibility of an escalation of violence with unthinkable consequences. We call upon the parties to maintain restraint and resolve the situation through corresponding diplomatic and political channels. We welcome the steps taken to that end by the Secretary-General.

Bolivia is a pacifist country that respects international law and actively contributes to the maintenance of international peace and security. Bolivia will not take a position on the referendum that took place in Crimea nor on the territorial situation of that region.

Respectful of democratic principles and the principle of sovereign equality of States, Bolivia cannot remain silent in the light of the interruption of a constitutional process, in the light of a legitimately elected Government being overthrown. The phrase "regime change" can be heard in many parts of our planet. The same words and some of the same methods have been used for several decades to overthrow democratic Governments on all continents. Democratically elected Governments are stifled in the name of democracy. Wars are begun in the name of peace. Poverty is brought into being in the name of prosperity. That is the logic of the double standard — the double standard that a few insist on imposing on others.

Bolivia is asking whether it is a threat to international security when international law is talked about only when it serves one's interests. Is it not a threat to international security when some violate the sovereignty

of peoples? Is it not a threat to international security when some are trying to rebuild a unipolar world? Is it not a violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State when millions of dollars are provided through non-governmental organizations, when the media bombards countries with disinformation and when opponents of democratically elected Governments receive financial support? Is it not a threat to international peace and security when any Power can incessantly build up arms and needlessly use military force in all parts of the globe? Is it not a threat when the major Powers drag other countries into new confrontations as they see fit? Neither threats nor tanks should replace diplomacy.

The series of attacks suffered by our countries in recent years force us to remain vigilant. Bolivia condemns both the logic that seeks to impose isolation and the sanctions that are being implemented outside of international law. Our vote therefore does not represent support for or condemnation of a particular country. Rather, it is an expression of disagreement that matters affecting peoples can be manipulated by major Powers, undermining the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. For that reason, Bolivia will vote against draft resolution A/68/L.39 before us today.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): Norway fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. In addition, in the light of the fundamental principles of international relations and international law that we are discussing today, I would like to make a national statement on behalf of my country.

Norway supports the draft resolution contained in document A/68/L.39 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The draft resolution reconfirms the importance of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, notably the obligation of all States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and to settle their disputes by peaceful means in full respect of international law. Significantly, the draft resolution also affirms the General Assembly's commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Respect for international law is fundamental in international relations. That is a key priority in Norway's foreign policy. One of the most basic and important rules under international law is the prohibition of the use of force. No State has the right to intervene in the affairs of another State through the use of armed force or coercion. The international community must react when such fundamental principles and rules under international law are violated. We need to be clear on such important issues. Further, as was mentioned by the representatives of Costa Rica and Iceland, that is of particular importance for small countries.

Norway does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea or Sevastopol. There are no independent reports of abuse of Russian-speaking minorities in Crimea or in eastern Ukraine. If such abuse had been the case, several international mechanisms for dealing with such situations within the framework of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could have been called upon. Those mechanisms were not used in Crimea. Norway welcomes the adoption of the mandate for an OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine, and we commend the Conflict Prevention Centre for the swift deployment of personnel.

Over the past few weeks, the international community has tried to engage Russia in a political dialogue with Ukraine. Norway will strongly urge Russia to engage in such a political process in order to find a political solution and negotiated resolution to the conflict.

Mr. Menelaou (Cyprus): Cyprus aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and the European Council conclusions. We will also vote in favour of draft resolution A/68/L.39.

Developments in Ukraine are a source of major concern. As a country that is enduring a foreign occupation, Cyprus stresses the importance of adhering to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence which must be applied uniformly and for all. We believe that a political solution based on full respect for the principles of and obligations under international law is possible and must be pursued by all parties involved. We encourage restraint and a consensual approach and reiterate the importance of defusing the situation through diplomatic means.

In that regard, we welcome the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and the deployment to Ukraine of Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović. We also welcome the deployment of the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the

continued cooperation of the United Nations with other regional actors, such as the Council of Europe.

Cyprus enjoys close relations with both Ukraine and Russia. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to reach out to all regions and population groups and to ensure full protection of the rights of people belonging to different ethnicities. The new Government should be representative of all Ukrainian citizens and their aspirations. We also encourage the Ukrainian authorities to investigate all acts of violence. At the same time, we encourage Russia to commit to a diplomatic solution and contribute to the de-escalation of tensions.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on sub-item (b) of agenda item 33. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.39.

I now give the floor to those who have asked to speak in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): As a small State with a tiny population, open borders and no standing army, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines owes its continued peaceful existence as an independent and sovereign nation to a robust and universally accepted body of international law, which includes the United Nations Charter. As active members of the General Assembly, we take seriously former Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 1998 assessment that the contributions of small States "are the very glue of progressive international cooperation for the common good". We also agree wholeheartedly with former United States president John F. Kennedy's 1963 assertion that "small nations... can and must help build a world peace".

One of the essential contributions to be made by small States like ours is the tireless advocacy for timeless principles enshrined in international law. With no ideological or geostrategic axes to grind, we consider it our solemn obligation to not only articulate those principles, but to ensure that they are applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths, rather than selective, uneven and unpredictable tools to further hegemonic or great Power ambition. Such a jaundiced view of international law would weaken the integrity and legitimacy of the General Assembly and, ultimately, the existential pillars upon which small and militarily weak States rely.

Accordingly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines views the recent events in Crimea and Ukraine with great concern. We reiterate the call made by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in its 5 March statement for the pacific settlement of disputes and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Secessionist referendums and those on the sovereignty of ethnically or historically distinct inhabitants of a particular geographic area should not be manipulated or selectively accepted by would-be imperial Powers. We note the sad irony that those most supportive of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence now reject such a declaraion by Crimea, while those with the strongest arguments against the decision of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the Kosovar unilateral declaration of independence now cite it approvingly. We also note that those who advised Argentina to take careful note of the views of 99 per cent of the residents in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) are now branding the opinions of 97 per cent of the residents of Crimea as invalid.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also recalls that the principles put forward to justify intervention in Ukraine are eerily similar to those posited 31 years ago in the context of our CARICOM neighbour Grenada. However, the legal defenders and dissenters have switched places this time.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has long advocated and advanced the principle of territorial integrity, even in the case of ongoing civil war and sectarian unrest. Similarly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines firmly defends paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. We also view the principle of self-determination for non-implanted populations, particularly in the context of decolonization, to be sacrosanct.

Unfortunately, the nature of today's draft resolution (A/68/L.39) and the arguments of its chief proponents have called into question the universal and consistent applicability of international law in such and similar instances. Despite our real and continuing concerns over the events that have taken place in Crimea and Ukraine, we view today's draft resolution as motivated more by the principals than by principles. Many of the major Powers on either side of that particular dispute have reversed their long-standing positions on similar

conflicts and are now on record as contradicting themselves, notwithstanding their efforts to find legal and factual distinctions. Also, it is regrettable that the Assembly has failed to consider the historical context of that particular geopolitical dispute and the nature of the recent change of regime in Ukraine.

Such concerns compel Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

Mrs. Carrion (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/68/L.39, even though we agree with many of the concepts outlined in the draft text. On previous occasions, our country has expressed its views on conflicts or situations that threaten the main principles of international law, such as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Our country's long-standing support for international law and the role of multilateralism has always led us to act consistently in upholding the law and the principle of the territorial integrity of States. The most recent cases were Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence and the referendum of the people of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). In both cases, we rejected the possibility of undermining such principles.

We believe that the territorial integrity of States is a principle of the United Nations and a fundamental standard of basic international law that all States should respect as a fundamental element for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation among members of the international community. In the light of that long-standing position of our country, in the specific case of the Crimean peninsula Uruguay believes that any declaration that is not in line with the constitutional principles of the Ukrainian State cannot alter the internationally recognized borders and therefore contravenes the principle of the territorial integrity of States. International legality must prevail.

However, while consistent in that regard, the draft resolution also contains other elements of a political nature that our country believes to be inappropriate and that significantly alter its scope, which, in our view, should focus solely on applying the principle of the territorial integrity of States.

The promotion of democratic principles is the responsibility of all actors involved in the current events in Ukraine. It is important that all such stakeholders contribute to the country's stability, the democratic legitimacy of its institutions and the peaceful resolution of the various interests present in the Ukrainian society, and prevent the heightening of tension at the national and regional levels.

Finally, Uruguay hopes that the conflict of interests that Ukraine is currently experiencing can be resolved exclusively by peaceful means on the basis of dialogue among the parties and in full respect for international law and democratic values.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador reaffirms its commitment to peace and the strict respect for human rights, international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Likewise, we reiterate our total commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to the primacy of multilateralism.

In analysing the situation under consideration, we recall our history, in particular the invaluable backing and support that we received from the international community in resolving the internal conflict that affected the country in the 1980s. We reaffirm our commitment to peace and respect for human rights, international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter. We also note our overwhelming commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes and, again, to the primacy of multilateral action.

El Salvador acknowledges the difficulties faced by the Ukrainian people. However, we believe that the complex situation faced by Ukraine and its neighbouring areas is not fully reflected in draft resolution A/68/L.39. The draft text does not promote areas of dialogue that would make it possible to reach a solution on the basis of the principles of international law and that primarily seek to de-escalate the conflict and to ensure human rights and the political, economic and social stability of the region.

Similarly, El Salvador believes that the content of the draft resolution will not help to resolve the root causes of the crisis. It does not call for dialogue among the actors and countries involved in the crisis or set an appropriate precedent for dealing with various points of inter- and intra-State tensions in the world on geographical grounds. Our country supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote a direct dialogue between the parties. We reiterate the need to implement of United Nations reform to enable the Organization to better respond to the current complex international reality. El Salvador appeals to all parties to continue to

seek peaceful and diplomatic solutions that favour the people's call for and right to their own development.

Given all those points, El Salvador has taken the sovereign decision to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution before us, contained in document A/68/L.39.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.39, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.39, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine". A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Guyana, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia

Draft resolution A/68/L.39 was adopted by 100 votes to 11, with 58 abstentions (resolution 68/262).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Rodríguez Pineda (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala voted in favour of resolution 68/262, which was just adopted. We did so because we cannot endorse the territorial dismemberment of any State on the basis of unilateral arguments invoking people's right to self-determination. That violates both the Charter of the United Nations and the international order established over the past 69 years. That is why we also cannot accept the unilateral decision of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which is an integral part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine, to convene

a referendum that would in effect justify its secession from Ukraine. Nor can we accept the subsequent steps aimed at the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation.

On the other hand, we have serious concerns about the situation. Our concerns originated with the street protests against the established Government in Ukraine, which evolved from peaceful protests to situations of violence and a breaking of the established constitutional order, whose legitimacy could be questionable. We hope that those doubts can be overcome through an open and inclusive electoral process, which fully respects the country's ethnic, cultural and regional diversity, opening the way to a plural Government which would seek friendly relations with all its neighbours. It is possible that a federal State could help in achieving those objectives. But it is up to the peoples of Ukraine to decide in a sovereign manner on their future.

We are also concerned about the present international environment, which seems to be the revival of a dividing fault line between East and West, which we believed was part of the past. While we understand that the present international context makes it impossible to return to what we previously called the "Cold War", which caused so much harm to the world and adversely affected my own country, that atmosphere of tension, if not of confrontation, makes us very uncomfortable and is eroding bit by bit the multiple channels of cooperation that have been built up between the Russian Federation and the main members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. We believe that the events in Ukraine that triggered those tensions also hold the potential to make the country a place where the main external actors in the international arena can come together, to the benefit of the entire world.

In light of all this, we urgently call on all parties to address the aforementioned conflict situation, which would require above all a diplomatic solution to the dispute between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Such an outcome must take into account the diversity of the country and at the same time respect its territorial integrity. In that regard, we support the good offices that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon offered, and we trust that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, together with the United Nations, can play a relevant role in reaching the aforementioned objective.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): Nigeria voted in favour of resolution 68/262, which was adopted today, solely on the basis of principle. We were guided by the same consideration when we voted for draft resolution S/2014/189, submitted to the Security Council on 15 March.

We want it to be clearly understood that in voting for those draft resolutions, Nigeria neither supports nor opposes any particular country or group of countries. Rather, Nigeria firmly upholds the sanctity of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, in accordance with the Declaration on Rights and Duties of States of 1949, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and other relevant instruments that protect the sovereignty of States, the inviolability of their borders and territorial integrity, as well as their political independence.

We did not take lightly the decision to vote in favour of the two texts. We weighed the evidence of the case on the scales of justice and the reality of the situation in our own part of the world. We also considered the universality of the application of the principles that we pledged to uphold in our interaction with the rest of the world. Both draft resolutions reaffirm the fundamental principles of international law and the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that States must respect the rule of law at the international level. They must demonstrate due regard for the universal and self-evident truth that all States are equal in the sight of the law, regardless of their size, their wealth, their power or their influence.

Nigeria had hoped that, after the failure of the Security Council to adopt the draft resolution before it, alternative means of addressing the situation in Ukraine would be found, such as resorting to regional dispute resolution arrangements to which the concerned parties belong. It is our firm conviction that peace can be achieved only on the basis of mutual respect. Indeed, respect is the foundation on which the rule of law is anchored. In that regard, we believe that the protection of ethnic minorities, the guarantee of their inviolable rights and respect for their dignity, among others, are the obligation of States. Therefore, no State should deny the rights of entire nationalities or strip them of their identities, including the use of their native languages.

The United Nations and its Member States must view with concern and apprehension and condemn without reservation all infringements of the Charter and provisions of international law wherever they occur and no matter who perpetrates them. Nigeria will continue to abide by the rule of law and respect the

provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Nigeria takes this opportunity to reiterate its call that States should, as much as possible, endeavour to seek peaceful and amicable ways to settle their disputes, regardless of the nature of the disputes. Those principles, which are also enshrined in article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, to which Nigeria solemnly subscribes, stress the need for respect for the internationally recognized borders of States.

Nigeria will continue to oppose the use and the threat of use of force in settling international disputes. We have consistently called for dialogue, mediation, restraint and an end to hostile rhetoric. Nigeria has advocated mediation and the pacific settlement of all disputes, including territorial disputes. Our willing submission to the ruling of the International Court of Justice in our dispute with the Republic of Cameroon should serve as a beacon and an inspiration to all law-abiding nations.

As a long-standing member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nigeria will not recognize power blocs or spheres of influence aimed at creating some ephemeral balance of power, which only serve to undermine rather than uphold the universal principles of the United Nations and supremacy of international law. Nigeria is resolved to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the situation in Ukraine and will, in that endeavour, be guided and inspired by universally accepted principles, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and other normative principles of international law.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile values the fact that the General Assembly, as the only principal organ of the United Nations with universal membership, has spoken on the situation in Ukraine, because what is at stake are principles contemplated in the Charter of the United Nations and international law that affect the very coexistence of States, such as the obligation to refrain from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. Likewise, we support the appeal to all of the parties to resolve the situation peacefully through direct political dialogue, to refrain from unilateral actions and to commit to international mediation.

In the same vein, Chile reiterates its support for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to prevent an escalation of the situation, to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis, and for the due protection of the human rights of all people, including all minorities. Chile values the work that is being done in that area by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other regional organizations.

Mr. Neo Ek Beng Mark (Singapore): Singapore opposes the annexation of any country or territory, as it contravenes international law. We also object to any unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country under any pretext. Singapore affirms the principles of respect for the territorial integrity of and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation, and respect for sovereignty and the rule of law.

Singapore therefore opposes the annexation of Crimea to Russia. All parties should respect international law and take steps to de-escalate tensions and resolve the crisis peacefully. Accordingly, Singapore voted in favour of resolution 68/262.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 15 March, the Security Council considered a draft resolution at a time of extreme tension in Ukraine, when there was a serious risk of the situation escalating and leading to violence. At that time, Argentina voted in favour of the aforementioned draft resolution, as we understood that it clarified the international standards and the fundamental principles that should guide the international community, without any reference to future acts or the hypothetical consequences of a referendum that had not yet taken place.

In that vein, once again, a text has been proposed based on a statement in line with an interpretation by the international community of domestic Ukrainian laws that is not coherent with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of that country. In that respect, we have noted a lack of coherency in several statements.

The Charter of the United Nations is very clear and leaves no room for interpretations based on the circumstantial interests of each nation. My country regrets the fact that the parties involved in the situation under consideration today have not duly taken into account repeated appeals by the international community to respect the principles to which we have all adhered as Member States to respect the primacy of the principle of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of all States; to abstain from military, economic or political intervention in the internal affairs of other States; and to strictly align

their actions with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Argentina will continue to comply with those principles, and we regret the double standards employed by various members of the international community, who adapt their actions and statements to geopolitical necessities in order to deal with specific situations.

Argentina does not believe in adopting a confrontational stance that is a throwback to previous eras in which the international community was divided into separate and opposed blocs, thus preventing them from building a common future. We intend for our decisions not to fall back into the concept of a world divided by ideological barriers, a world where the principal victims were the peoples of Latin America, Africa and Asia. We believe that those situations cannot be resolved through unilateral acts of any kind, especially by actors with great influence who should, in fact, be relying on constructive diplomacy. We hope that they will assume their responsibilities.

We are convinced that we must all strive to avoid encouraging dissent and escalating tensions to promote confrontation. We believe that the timing in bringing the draft resolution before us for consideration does not contribute to fulfilling the objective of the entire international community to find a peaceful and political solution to the crisis; it is only contributing to making the situation even more complex.

Argentina will continue to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Accordingly, we reject initiatives that seek to isolate one of the parties or impose unilateral economic sanctions that undermine the conditions that could lead to a dialogue that has become very urgent. We reaffirm once again that the international community should concentrate its efforts on persuading the parties to the Ukrainian crisis to start a constructive dialogue that will allow them find a peaceful solution to the current situation, strictly uphold human rights and international humanitarian law, and respect the ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious rights of all minorities. At the same time, the efforts of the international community should be strictly framed within international law and the Charter of the United Nations with the aim of bringing domestic peace to that country and creating an atmosphere conducive to international negotiations.

Our position on territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, be it through political, economic or military means, is as clear as it is consistent with our actions. However, in times like these, resolution 68/262 goes in the direction of limiting dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We therefore abstained in the voting. At the same time, we emphatically support the steps taken by the Secretary-General in this and in all conflicts that involve States Members of the United Nations.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have followed the situation in Ukraine very closely and we would like a just solution to the crisis to be found in a consensual manner, in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. On the basis of our belief in peaceful and consensual solution to the conflict, we encourage all the parties to avoid any escalation of violence, seek compromise and inclusive dialogue, and engage cooperatively and constructively in the search for a solution acceptable to all.

We were bound by the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter when we voted in favour of resolution 68/262. Those principles are internationally accepted. They include, in particular, the principles of the non-use of force, of settling international conflicts peacefully, of respecting the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all States Members of the United Nations, and of maintaining a comprehensive political dialogue. From our examination of the draft resolution, we came to understand that it sought to assert the aforementioned principles of international law. On the basis of those principles, we voted in favour of resolution 68/262.

Mr. Ja Song Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea voted against resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine". In that regard, as a follow-up, I would like to clarify the position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As far as the current crisis in Ukraine is concerned, it has been unquestionably caused by the interference of the United States and other Western countries in the internal affairs of Ukraine and their instigation of chaos and disorder. It is the principled position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to formally oppose and reject any attempt to overthrow legitimate Governments and social systems through such forms of conspiracy as interventions, pressure and the colour revolutions. The Democratic People's Republic of

Korea respects the rights of the people of Ukraine and their choices based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws and regulations.

The United States and other Western countries have unlawfully interfered in the internal affairs of Ukraine and instigated chaos and disorder, thereby bringing instability, violence and strife between peoples in Ukraine to extreme levels. That is the main cause of the reunification of Ukraine with Russia.

It is a well-established practice of the United States to intervene in the internal affairs of sovereign States and provoke chaos and bloodshed for the purposes of gaining hegemony over the world. In particular, the United States is ruthlessly imposing sanctions, blockades and isolation upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea while openly threatening it through military exercises. In addition, the United States is advancing its historical human rights conspiracy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by driving it to a dangerous degree and extreme ends. All those acts serve the purposes of the United States and the Western countries in stifling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the simple reason that we are not in complete agreement with them.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea notes that the reunification of Ukraine with Russia has been undertaken in a legitimate manner by means of a referendum based on the voluntary wishes of the people of Ukraine in line with the right to self-determination set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea therefore voted against resolution 68/262. Further, we intend to oppose all efforts aimed at overthrowing legitimate Governments and social systems and at undermining respect for the right and the choice of the people of Ukraine, which is based on the principles of equal rights and self-determination stipulated in the United Nations Charter and other international laws and regulations.

In conclusion, we hope that the current situation in Ukraine will be resolved in a fair manner to bring about peace and stability in accordance with the wishes and interests of the people of Ukraine pursuant to internationally recognized laws and principles, in particular the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are meeting today in order to discuss a very important matter having to do with the global international order. We believe that this is the appropriate way to consider the issue. We believe that the current global order has not been able to absorb the changes the world has seen over the past 25 years following the collapse of a global order marked by bipolarity and the Cold War. As a result, the current crisis in Ukraine is only a sign of the aftermath of a former order that we wish had remained in the past.

We believe, in accordance with the principles of international law, that the best way to resolve crises in the international community is to employ diplomacy and avoid escalation. However, we are also convinced that the world today needs reform and a total revamping of international institutions in order to make them better suited to the current situation and able to take into account elements that the international community should have been taking into consideration over the past two decades.

We observe, in that respect, that in many cases international law is not consistent when it comes to the concerns of States, which may be better addressed at the regional rather than the international level if we are to guarantee peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourly relations among States. It is also true that there is sometimes a contradiction between the will of the people and the legal frameworks that govern them. As a result, those elements must be reconciled.

If we do not deal with those phenomena actively through the establishment of creative mechanisms that are not selective and are able to strike a balance between principles and interests, international and regional crises will follow one upon another, and the international order will not be able to contain them. That is why Egypt abstained in the voting on resolution 68/262, just adopted.

Mr. Nguyen Trac Ba (Viet Nam): Viet Nam is following the situation in Ukraine and Crimea closely and attentively, and it is our wish that the parties concerned exercise restraint and seek political solutions to the current situation in order to resolve issues through peaceful means on the basis of respect for the fundamental principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate aspirations of people for the early stabilization of the situation, for the sake of peace and stability in the region and the world.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra Velásquez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru's vote in favour of resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", was another statement of our consistent position advocating respect and adherence to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, Peru believes that the peaceful resolution of disputes and respect for international treaties are essential to guarantee international peace and security.

Peru recognizes the Secretary-General's efforts to promote mediation, and in that respect we appeal for constructive and inclusive dialogue that takes into account the legitimate interests of all the parties involved, with which Peru maintains friendly and cooperative relations. My country believes that, with regard to international law, it is essential to avoid a return to the dynamics of the past, which were fraught with divisions and confrontation and thus undermined our peoples' progress and development.

Mr. Bamrungphong (Thailand): Thailand has carefully considered resolution 68/262 and decided to vote in favour of it because of the overriding importance that Thailand attaches to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Thailand recognizes that the current situation is complex and delicate. It is our fervent hope that all efforts will be made to bring about an immediate de-escalation of tensions and that the door will be kept open for dialogue that would lead to a political solution and the restoration of peace as soon as possible based on the legitimate interests of all parties concerned.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova has followed with great concern the unfolding of the situation in Ukraine and remains deeply worried about the developments in that neighbouring and friendly country. In that context, we have already stressed our position in support of the principles of international law applying to all Member States — in this particular case to Ukraine — on their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 2. We also believe that bilateral and multilateral agreements make up a body of international law that must be observed, including in the case of Ukraine.

While welcoming the commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to respect and protect the rights of all persons in Ukraine, including minorities, we acknowledge that the future of Ukraine can be considered and decided upon only based on the free will and aspirations of all Ukrainians themselves, without any outside influence.

We regret the conduct of the so-called referendum in Crimea. The Government of the Republic of Moldova expressed its position on 16 March and reiterates that the so-called referendum on the status of the Crimean peninsula cannot be legal, due to the fact that it contravenes the Ukrainian Constitution and international law. The conditions in which the so-called referendum took place cannot be considered representative of the free expression of the people's will and does not correspond to relevant international standards and law. The Republic of Moldova stands with the people of Ukraine and will provide all possible support to efforts to overcome the current crisis in a peaceful manner and in conformity with the principles of international law.

We commend the ongoing United Nations efforts with regard to the crisis and look forward to the continued constructive role of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the United Nations system as a whole in that regard. We also welcome the 21 March decision of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to deploy a special OSCE monitoring mission to Ukraine, taken this time by consensus, which is a good example for the United Nations to follow.

The crisis in Ukraine presents difficulties for the existing system of inter-State relations and the United Nations. The implementation of international principles on sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States, the rule of law, including in the context of multilateral and bilateral relations, respect for human rights and free and fair expression of the popular will are paramount to the well-functioning of this Organization in particular and to the system of international security and international relations as a whole.

As a country that has had an unresolved and protracted separatist conflict on its territory for over 20 years, we look forward to the resolution of conflict through peaceful means and dialogue. That is why my delegation voted in favour of resolution 68/262, in support of respect for the Charter of the United Nations and its principles.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): The crisis in Ukraine is particularly painful and sensitive for

Kazakhstan. For centuries, the Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian people have lived in friendship and accord. Today, Kazakhstan is home to Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Germans, Poles, Koreans and many others living in peace and harmony. Together we raise our children, strengthen unity and friendship and create a prosperous future for our common land, Kazakhstan.

In its statements, Kazakhstan has repeatedly confirmed its adherence to the fundamental principles of international law. We are interested in Ukraine remaining a sovereign, stable and independent State. The economic recovery of Ukraine is the main priority and prerequisite for the full-fledged normalization of the country's situation.

Kazakhstan always follows an independent foreign policy based on a balance of interests. Kazakhstan's position that conflicts should be resolved through negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations, reflects the views and interests of the majority of States of the world. In today's critical circumstances, we have to take into account the faits accomplis and current realities. It is of crucial importance to heed the voice of reason and search all possible ways to achieve a peaceful settlement of the crisis through political and diplomatic means and within the framework of internationally agreed formats.

Kazakhstan calls upon all parties involved to leave emotions, mutual accusations and finger-pointing behind and reject the language of ultimatums and sanctions. We should not allow a further escalation of tensions and avoid making the situation more complicated, which could have unpredictable consequences on both the regional and global scales. We stand ready to promote and support international mediation efforts and facilitate the negotiation process among all parties and their leaders with a view to the earliest resolution of the situation in Ukraine.

In light of the all this, Kazakhstan abstained in the voting.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): Respect for the Charter of the United Nations is paramount to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter enshrines the principles of sovereign equality among Member States and the non-interference in the internal affairs of its Members. Malaysia has always upheld those noble principles. We call upon all parties to adhere to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

Malaysia values its close relations with both Russia and Ukraine. In that regard, we urge both countries to engage in dialogue and explore all possible means of finding a peaceful solution. We hope that both sides will adopt a moderate approach and work towards an amicable solution. Malaysia also supports every peaceful effort, including the international diplomatic initiative aimed at resolving the situation in Ukraine.

Malaysia hopes that all efforts will be exhausted before other measures are considered. All parties involved must respect the rule of law, act responsibly and aim towards finding a peaceful settlement. We believe that the exercise of moderation by all concerned parties could contribute towards reaching a sustainable solution. We would not like to see an escalation of the situation and urge all parties to exercise restraint. The interests, welfare and security of the people of Ukraine must be given the top priority, while taking into account the implications on the overall stability and peace in the region.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): Azerbaijan voted in favour of resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Our position is based on the following understanding. The current situation in Ukraine is a matter of serious concern requiring continued international and regional efforts towards a de-escalation of the crisis and finding a peaceful and negotiated solution in accordance with international law and the Constitution of Ukraine.

The Republic of Azerbaijan condemns extremism, radicalism and separatism in all their forms and manifestations and reiterates is unequivocal adherence to the fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of States, which constitute the basic foundation of international relations and the international legal order. We strongly support the resolution of all conflicts between Member States through political dialogue on the basis of the aforementioned principles.

In situations of armed conflict or political crisis involving inter-State relations, no solution can be reached which is inconsistent with international law, particularly where fundamental norms are concerned, such as the obligation to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We believe that the strict observance of those norms concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States and the fulfilment in

good faith of the obligations assumed by States are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. Richards (Jamaica): Jamaica is firmly committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, including respect for the territorial integrity of sovereign States, as well as the resolution of disputes through peaceful means. In that connection, we remain concerned about the situation in Ukraine and consider that the complexities of the situation require the international community to act in a determined, but balanced, manner. That is based on our view that the rule of law and the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter have to be respected by all States, whether large or small. That protects the weak from the strong and ensures that the use or threat of use of force is avoided. It is also important that the application by the international community of the principles underpinning the Charter be undertaken in an even-handed manner, thereby avoiding unnecessary tension for partial political gain.

It was after weighing such considerations that Jamaica took the decision to abstain in the voting on resolution 68/262, as in our view it makes some presumptions that could in effect result in more tensions in the region, delaying the search for a peaceful solution. In keeping with the statement of the Caribbean Community on 5 March, Jamaica continues to support the call for the use of international mediation and/or negotiations to address security and human rights concerns in Ukraine, under the auspices of the United Nations. We further reiterate the call made by the Caribbean Community for all parties involved to act with self-restraint and responsibility in order to reduce tensions and avoid destabilization in that region.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela voted against resolution 68/262 on the situation in Ukraine since we believe that the resolution does not give the attention necessary to the delicate political situation that resulted from the interruption of the democratic constitutional fabric in that European State, which led to the establishment of a developmente facto Government.

Venezuela reiterated its commitment to promoting, protecting and upholding international order, international law and its institutions, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our national position, which is based on constitutional premises, is consistent with the doctrine that has been developed in the Union of South American Nations, in which its members have categorically opposed changes in the democratic constitutional order of the States of the region.

Our country reiterates its rejection of the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Ukraine by extremist groups, whose activity, which is encouraged by external Powers connected to opposition groups in the de facto Ukrainian Government, led to very unfortunate events and undermined democracy and the rule of law in the country. Given the negative impact on the peace and stability of that region, such a situation cannot be disregarded since it threatens the security of major parts of the Ukrainian population, who believe their human rights, including their right to life, to be at risk.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the increasing trend of democratically elected Governments being overthrown by groups with extremist ideologies inherited from those that in the past were responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War and the systematic extermination of millions of human beings and that now, in Ukraine, with the complicity and indifference of certain States, reappear stirring up violence in order to incite hatred, intolerance, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism, fuelling the risk of a conflict with unpredictable repercussions.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its call for dialogue and negotiations between the parties in order to overcome the political crisis in Ukraine. We are convinced that it is up to the Ukrainian people to resolve their differences peacefully through an inclusive and democratic dialogue with a view to re-establishing the constitutional order that has been undermined. The international community should support direct dialogue between the parties so as to contribute to the validity of the democratic rule of law, taking into account the legitimate interests of all members of Ukraine's various communities and regions.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country has closely followed the serious events in Ukraine since last year, when the demonstrations began in the city of Kyiv, The protests intensified throughout the month of December 2013 and then in January and February of this year and degenerated into street battles provoked by violent agents on both sides, which caused human and material losses and were aggravated by

the irresponsible presence of foreign politicians, who encouraged the protesters to reject the Government of Ukraine. That spiral of violence created the conditions for the establishment of an irregular Government in Ukraine without to date having clarified the procedures used to remove a democratically elected President.

Those very serious events are the precedents for the referendum that took place on 16 March in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in the city of Sevastopol. Such precedents are of crucial importance in considering the agenda item before us because foreign interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine began long before 16 March. Regrettably, that was not mentioned in resolution 68/262.

In that regard, my delegation would like to say the following. First, my country supports the principles of territorial integrity and of the self-determination of peoples. Secondly, for my country a local referendum is not sufficient to justify a change in the territorial integrity of a State. Thirdly, Ecuador condemns any interference in the internal affairs of other States and any form of intervention, whether it be armed incursion, aggression, occupation or an economic or military blockade. Fourthly, we reject foreign interference in the affairs of Ukraine, which have caused the political destabilization of that country since last year. Fifthly, my country, Ecuador, does not recognize Governments established following the collapse of a democratic order. We oppose the propensity of certain Powers to provoke regime change through the use or threat of use of force. Sixthly, my country does not acknowledge the validity of any unilateral sanctions that a State or a group of States seek to impose on another outside the Charter of the United Nations.

For all those reasons, my country abstained in the voting on the resolution.

Mr. Lazarev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus welcomes all efforts to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and to de-escalate the situation in the region. Belarus supports first and foremost resort to mechanisms that are less representative than the General Assembly but that may now be more successful in bringing about a peaceful resolution of the situation. We note the important work in Ukraine of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission and the assessment mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): Algeria, along with several other countries, abstained in the voting on the resolution submitted for our consideration today. Despite our abstention, we would like to reiterate our strict adherence to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, specifically those stated in Articles 1 and 2 that refer to territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty, as well as equal rights and self-determination. We consider those principles as the main cornerstones of international relations and the basis of international law.

Algeria takes pride in its close and friendly relationship both with the Russian Federation and with Ukraine, and cannot but join the calls for the continuation and strengthening of the dialogue to avoid escalation so as to solve the differences and to quell unwanted consequences. We are encouraged by all efforts aimed at calming the current tensions, including those of the Secretary-General, whose personal endeavours we support in that regard. Algeria will obviously continue to contribute to that end, both directly or within the regional and political groups to which we belong, in order to ease the tensions.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Honduras voted in favour of resolution 68/262 on the basis of its full respect for the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, which inspire the international community and are the foundation of the Charter of the United Nations. Those principles contribute to and should continue to be the basis for a constructive dialogue towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts between the political actors. Honduras trusts that the resolution not only strengthens the principles that gave rise to the United Nations but also is a means for maintaining peace, security and the international order. Finally, we call on the rest of the international community to continue to respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Ferreira (Cabo Verde) (*spoke in French*): Cabo Verde understands that relations among States must be guided and supported by the universally accepted principles of international law. The Republic of Cabo Verde voted in favour of resolution 68/262 because, as a State Member of the United Nations, we believe that the solution to a dispute can be achieved only through respect for principles, including those enshrined in the

Charter of the Organization, that seek to promote and preserve peace in the world.

On behalf of the Government, I would also like to note and underscore that Cabo Verde's vote is first and foremost in favour of world and regional peace, and that it was exercised in the conviction that political dialogue and the pursuit of peaceful and negotiated solutions remain the path to follow in settling disputes such as the one we are currently considering.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Libya voted in favour of resolution 68/262 on the basis of our commitment to defending the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We in Libya are fully aware of the historical background of the problems on the Crimean peninsula. We are fully aware of the Russian Federation's interest in Ukraine. Nevertheless, we also cannot ignore the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Those principles are entrenched in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law. Furthermore, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, of which Libya is a member, clearly states the need to respect the post-independence boundaries of States. Therefore, any changes in the borders of any State must be undertaken within the constitutional order of that country and in accordance with the relevant national laws.

Libya stresses the importance of dialogue and diplomatic efforts in resolving inter- and intra-State disputes. We believe that all States are duty-bound to not exploit difficult internal conditions in other States in order to interfere in their internal affairs and undermine their territorial integrity and independence. Libya hopes that the parties concerned will exercise self-restraint, not escalate the situation and endeavour to find a peaceful solution that respects the rights of all.

Ukraine and Russia are neighbours. They must be able to co-exist, and they should draw on their historical relations and the interests of their peoples to find a solution that will normalize relations between them as soon as possible. The international community ought to be encouraging them in that direction.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): I thank you, Mr. President, for affording me the opportunity to explain Botswana's position on resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which the Assembly has just adopted.

Botswana has been following the unfolding events in Ukraine closely and with deep concern. We are profoundly disturbed by the conflict and escalating tension between two sovereign, neighbouring States that share very deep historical ties. We continue to hope for a diplomatic and amicable solution to the crisis based on the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In that context, Botswana would like to reaffirm its strong faith in the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, specifically in relation to the respect for the sovereign equality, unity and territorial integrity of States. We believe those, among other principles of international law, to be essential for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Botswana therefore does not support the dismemberment of sovereign nations, either through unilateral declarations of independence or through coercion by external forces. As the Assembly may be aware, Botswana has consistently acted in accordance with those principles in the past, as we believe they are paramount to the maintenance of international peace and stability.

Botswana fully recognizes that the political crisis in Ukraine was precipitated by, among others, the unconstitutional removal of a democratically elected President. We therefore believe that it is critical, at this juncture, for sufficient space to be allowed for the diplomatic efforts that are currently under way at the bilateral level between Ukraine and Russia and at the international level to be pursued to their logical conclusion. Our continued hope is that those processes will deliver a positive and amicable outcome that not only serves to end the hostility between Ukraine and Russia, but also facilitates improved relations between those two sovereign States. Botswana feels very strongly that it is essential for the international community to have a balanced and impartial approach to the conflict.

Because of those considerations, Botswana abstained in the voting on the resolution.

Mr. Scappini Ricciardi (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", the delegation of Paraguay would like to make the following explanation of its abstention in the voting.

The Government of Paraguay has followed closely the events that have occurred on the Crimean peninsula.

It is of interest to us because we consider the Russian Federation and Ukraine to be fraternal countries with which we have enjoy cooperation in various areas. People of Russian and Ukrainian origin in our country have assisted us in the development of various areas of our country. That closeness means that we wish all the best for those two countries.

Paraguay reiterates its adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as they are the essential guiding concepts of our foreign policy. The Government of Paraguay therefore believes that the best way to resolve the current situation is through direct and open dialogue leading to a peaceful and political solution of the dispute.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): We would also like to speak in explanation of position on resolution 68/262, which was just adopted by the Assembly.

Armenia has consistently, over the years, taken a principled position on the promotion of democracy, freedom and rights, including and in particular the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as universal values and principles embraced by the Assembly and based on the Charter of the United Nations.

The key to resolving any crisis is to act within the framework of international law and seek an early solution to the differences through dialogue and cooperation. The current situation in Ukraine is a sensitive matter, and we strongly believe that an enduring solution can only be realized between the parties concerned through dialogue in a peaceful and negotiated manner.

Peaceful dialogue is also a responsible process. We support the view, expressed in this Hall earlier on numerous occasions, that solutions cannot be achieved as a result of statements made or resolutions adopted by the Assembly. On that basis, my delegation voted against the resolution just adopted.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 33.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.